



INTERNAL COMMERCE

OF THE COUNTRY,

ITS

TRADE AND TRAFFIC.

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SEPTEMBER, 1875

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A STATEMENT  
RELATING TO THE  
INTERNAL COMMERCE  
OF THE COUNTRY.

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TO THE PEOPLE of the *State of New York*, but for the present, more particularly, to those directly related to and interested in the internal commerce of the country, its trade and traffic, as between the Western States and lakes and tide water at New York, the mart of our country. For some time past, and now, this subject has been and is being discussed all the way through the country, from the city of New York to said Western States inclusive.

The time has arrived when the trade and traffic referred to must have greater means and facilities for its interchange, or the *outward-bound* products of the Western States will find other channels to the Atlantic coast *than New York affords*.

The subject is pressing with great seriousness upon the country *for relief*.

It is proposed in the statement following briefly to consider the present condition of matters in relation to this subject in the State of New York, and to enquire whether or not there is a way of great and permanent relief at comparatively small consideration or cost.

In order to perspicuity and exactness it is proposed to make *tide water at Troy*, and the *easterly end of Lake Erie* the termini for examination and comparison; as

westerly and easterly of said termini, navigation is free and uninterrupted, and no questions of distance occur.

Therefore, 1st. What does it cost, in the present state of the Erie canal, to carry a ton of freight from Buffalo to Troy?

2nd. What time does it take to carry a ton of freight from Buffalo to Troy?

3rd. How many tons of freight can be carried from Buffalo to Troy or tide water during the boating season or per annum, *via* the Erie Canal?

As the tonnage from the Western States and lakes bound to tide water, greatly preponderates over that which is westerly or inwardly bound, the latter will not be considered, neither that of *way* freight, as the line or route which commands the greater amount of outward-bound freight will command the greater amount of inwardly-bound through freight.

It is proposed to consider the cost of transportation at *remunerating prices to the carrier*, though it is believed that freight is carried through at times, by water and by rail, at *unremunerating rates*.

Therefore, the three enquiries stated *cover the ground*, in relation to the present means and facilities *afforded by the State of New York* for the trade and traffic referred to.

It is understood that the enlargement of the Erie Canal is completed, though the enlarged canal is not in good and proper condition, and never has been.

The fact that the Erie Canal at Buffalo cannot be freighted to its full capacity is readily understood, as a boat leaving Buffalo for tide water, possibly at the very first lock easterly encounters a *way* boat or boats bound easterly which causes detention to the boat



bound to tide water, which detention increases continually all the way to tide water, which circumstance raises the question, what is the amount of through freight or tonnage that may be shipped at Buffalo, to go through with fair and desirable dispatch, in relation to the capacity of the canal, or to the amount of tonnage arriving at tide water?

There are no means at hand to answer this question accurately, therefore we must be satisfied by what actually occurs, to wit: There is a certain amount of tonnage arriving at tide water per annum, *via* the Erie Canal, and a certain amount shipped at Buffalo per annum by the Erie Canal. These amounts must determine the matter, and may or may not be the exact truth or answer.

In view of the *demands* of this trade and traffic there cannot be much doubt, that the Erie Canal has been freighted and worked up to its capacity.

The greatest amount of tonnage ever delivered at tide water by the canal, in one season, was in 1862, when, according to the Auditor's Report, there was delivered 2,917,094 tons, which, therefore, we shall call the full capacity of the canal.

The same year, also, there occurred the largest shipment at Buffalo, *via* the Erie Canal, to wit: 1,980,982 tons. There is no reason to believe, nor is it probable that all said tonnage shipped at Buffalo went through to tide water, but, grant that it did, hence we safely arrive at the conclusion that no more than 1,981,000 tons can be shipped at Buffalo for tide water *via* the Erie Canal, in its present state, with the assurance, that it can go through with desirable dispatch. We will now answer, *briefly*, the three foregoing enquiries.

1st. It costs \$4.60 to carry one ton of freight from Buffalo to tide water.

2nd. It takes *ten days* to carry it through.

3rd. Only 1,981,000 tons can be shipped at Buffalo for and carried through to tide water.

The tonnage shipped at Buffalo *via* the Erie Canal, has been largely diminished each year, since 1862, and probably for good and assignable reasons, to wit: In 1862, the canal was crowded to its full capacity and freight moved slowly, consequently, large amounts were sent forward by rail and by other routes.

The state of things that occurred in 1862 was surely known *too well* at all the sources of produce of that year, and in view of the annual increase of tonnage bound to tide water it became necessary for the more Western parties to look to other channels for sending forward their products.

It is known, that now and for some five or six years past, large amounts of freight due, by the geographical position of its sources, to Lake Erie goes *via* the Pennsylvania Central, the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Roads and down the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers to New Orleans. Though we do not know the amount of the tonnage thus diverted from the New York route, there is no hazard in saying that it must be very large, and in view of the rapid settlement and improvement of the country, is increasing by a large percentage, annually. It is very likely to be more than equal to the present capacity of the Erie Canal at Buffalo. During the year 1867, the New York Central Railroad took 573,613 tons of freight from Buffalo.

The Erie Railroad is freighted principally at Dunkirk, which may be considered *due* to the easterly end of Lake Erie. Their tonnage of through freight is not given in their report to the State Engineer, but we

have the aggregate tonnage of each of the two roads, and the through tonnage of the Central, whereby, by a simple proportion, we may arrive at a near approximation of the through tonnage of the Erie, giving somewhat over one million of tons, which, together with the Central gives 1,573,613 tons. Thus we have another amount nearly equal to the Erie Canal capacity at *Buffalo*, which shows pretty clearly that there is *now due* to the Easterly end of Lake Erie and to the Erie Canal, about *three times* the tonnage that can be carried by the Erie Canal from Buffalo to tide water.

We will now suppose the enlarged Erie Canal to be in perfect condition.

The number of lockages *cannot be increased* but the boats will carry more, say 210 tons, which will give about 700,000 tons additional to go from Buffalo to tide water, *via* the Erie Canal, but allow that one million additional will be crowded through, making *all that can be sent* from Buffalo to tide water *via* the Erie Canal to be 2,981,000 tons.

The *decreased time* of going from Buffalo to tide water through the canal in perfect condition, as well as the *decreased cost* of carrying one ton of freight through the perfect canal, must be determined by experience, when the canal is in said perfect condition.

*Now*, we have no experience by which to determine either, and prefer not to introduce what may be considered a theoretical determination.

In the existing and embarrassing state of things in relation to said trade and traffic, together with the fact that so much of the Western products are finding routes to other ports upon the Atlantic coast than New York, and which, as the people of the State of New York, we would prefer to have the same go to the city



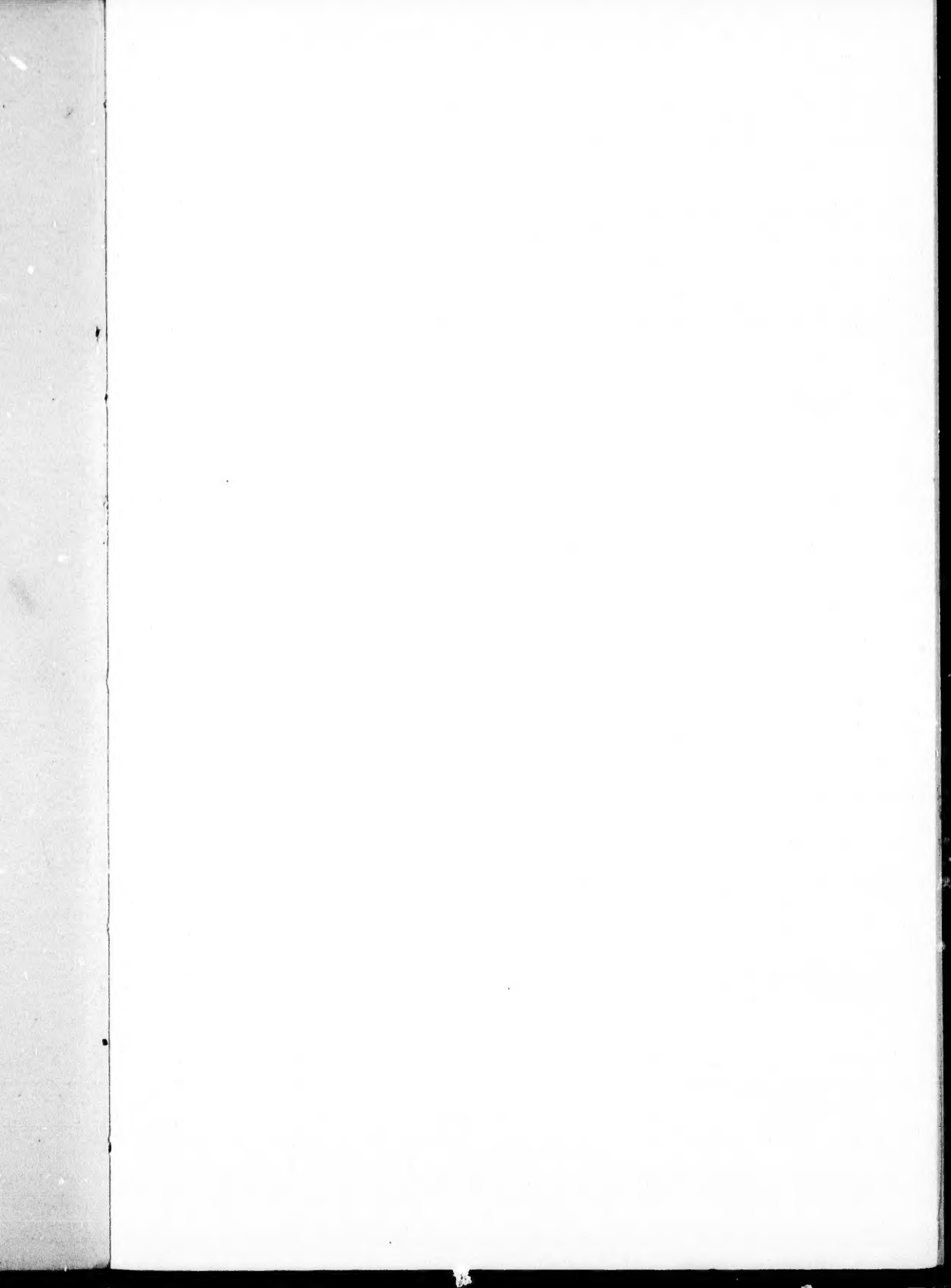
of New York, the mart of our country, and that it may so continue to be, we will now suppose the contemplated enlargements and improvements *via* the Champlain Canal route to be completed; the Caughnawaga Canal or (the canal between Lake Champlain and the St. Lawrence) made; the locks upon the St. Lawrence, as they now are and the Welland Canal and locks also as they now are :

What facilities and *relief* would thereby be afforded?

Upon the conditions stated, it is evident that *the capacity* of the Welland Canal must determine the amount of *relief*, as all the canals and locks easterly of the Welland are or are to be made much larger than those of the Welland at present.

As to the capacity of the Welland Canal we may safely assume, in view of its length and position, that nine-tenths of the vessels or steamboats that enter that canal from Lake Erie go through to Lake Ontario; therefore, in estimating its capacity, we need not provide for hindrances, and, as the *canal, locks and depth of water* are such that vessels carrying 400 and more tons cargo can pass through with facility, we come to the conclusion that the capacity of the Welland Canal *now* is somewhat over ten millions tons per annum. Vessels descending the St. Lawrence from Lake Ontario, unless heavily freighted, do not pass through what are called the St. Lawrence canals, as said vessels or steamers go down the rapids. Therefore, from Port Dalhousie, of the Welland Canal, to the northerly end of the Caughnawaga Canal (which is about 9 miles above Montreal) the navigation is lake and river, free and uninterrupted.

The proposed Caughnawaga Canal and the proposed enlargement and improvement of the Champlain Canal,





with the slack water navigation of the Hudson River between Fort Edward and Troy, are both to be upon a much larger scale than the present Welland, therefore the foregoing statement of the capacity of the Welland Canal holds good for the whole route from Lake Erie to Troy or tide water *via* the St. Lawrence.

We then come to the conclusion, and in the order of the foregoing three enquiries:

1st. That it will cost \$2.65 to carry a ton of freight from Lake Erie to tide water *via* the St. Lawrence.

2nd. The distance from Port Colbourn, (the Westerly end of the Welland Canal) to Troy *via* the St. Lawrence and Champlain route is 590 *miles*, of which 465 *miles* is free and uninterrupted, lake and river, *down stream* navigation, and 125 is canal. We arrive at the conclusion that it will take 4 days and 13 hours to carry a ton of freight from lake Erie to Troy or tide water.

3rd. We have shown that *ten millions* of tons can be carried through per annum, or during the season of navigation, *via* the St. Lawrence.

The St. Lawrence line is open from 12 to 18 days longer than the Erie Canal.

We find, then, that we can carry at on of freight from Lake Erie to tide water *via* the St. Lawrence for \$1.95 less than by the Erie Canal and that we can carry it at least in half the time or five days sooner by the St. Lawrence line, and we can carry more than *three times* the tonnage by that line per annum than by the Erie Canal, which will amply provide for the transportation of all the freight *now due* at the easterly end of Lake Erie.

Though we have shown the capacity *via* the St. Lawrence to be ten millions of tons, suppose we bring

upon that line only four millions of tons additional. The tolls upon the same, at about 40 cents per ton upon the Champlain Canal, improved, will pay for the proposed improvements and constructions of the Champlain portion in less than four years, beside keeping all the works in good condition, whereby we have a clear and an unquestionable and an incontestable argument and a sound financial basis for the proposed Champlain constructions.

Further, not only is the Caughnawaga Canal to be, forthwith, constructed but the lengthening and widening of the Welland Canal locks are authorised by recent acts of the Parliament of the Northern Dominion and to such a scale or dimension as will accommodate vessels and steamers carrying from 800 to 1000 tons burthen, which may sail from Lake Erie to New York without change or discharge, which *in truth and in earnest* calls for works of like dimensions upon the Champlain line, and the entire achievement, as above, attained at a cost of about five millions of dollars to the State of New York, all of which will be returned to the Treasury of the State, in tolls, in about four years.

"Oh! but we are to have a ship canal from Lake Ontario (Oswego) to tide water," so it is said.

Such a work will be about 205 miles long, which possibly may be had for from twenty to twenty-five millions of dollars. Now, in the name of good sound sense and judgment, why spend that when you can get a *better line*, one of *greater capacity*, of *quicker transit*, for one-fourth the sum.

Upon the subject of the *further* enlargement of the Erie Canal or a ship canal from Lake Ontario to tide water we can only hypothecate upon a hope or probability and, altogether, one of great uncertainty.



A greater amount of intelligence and more enlarged and enlightened views have to prevail in our Legislature before so expensive an undertaking will be met and encountered, however cogent and powerful the argument and reason for the same may be in truth.

But said cogent and powerful arguments and reasons for the gigantic improvements and expenditures to which they relate may be most readily annulled by showing that a *greater achievement* may be secured to said trade and traffic in the one for which we are advocating, and comparatively for a mere bagatelle in the way of expenditure.

It is a truth, beyond all controversy, that the people of the Northern Dominion (Canada) have by the formation of the country greater natural facilities for presenting, even for the City of New York, the *best* line for the carrying trade of the Western and North Western States, and we of the State of New York have to act *only a little in concert with them* to derive the full advantage of said natural advantages and that, at a very small cost, when considering the great favorable and inevitable results.

The requisition, as per the foregoing, in all its aspects and ramifications appears so obviously right as a state and financial policy that it would seem hardly necessary to enter upon any elaborate discussion to establish it as such. In truth, intelligently considered, it becomes apparent, as a foregone conclusion.

The enlargement and improvement of the public works of the St. Lawrence route, as referred to, are determined upon by the recent acts and resolutions of the Parliament of Canada, and that, too, without reference to the future action of the State of New York, which, no doubt, is a wise and sagacious policy.

They even now cause a large diversion of trade from New York, and with their further improved facilities will divert a still greater amount, which will go *via* Montreal and Quebec to foreign ports, leaving the City of New York unnecessarily but sadly in the lurch.

Further, the Caughnawaga Canal being made and the Champlain Canal proposed improvements not being made, Western States products will come *via* the St. Lawrence into Lake Champlain to Burlington, thence by rail to Boston.

The following remarks show how the existing state of our internal commerce is viewed by an intelligent foreigner.

Sir Morton Peto, intelligent upon matters we have been considering, and who has travelled extensively over our Western country, raises the enquiry:

"To what extent, is the amount of tonnage employed in inland intercourse adequate to the wants of the country? In view of *the distances* over which the traffic has to be extended the inland navigation of the country is *very inadequate* to the wants of the country. It has not kept pace with the population and progress of the country.

"The grain producers of the Western States are quite unable to find sufficient means of conveyance for their products."

We might enlarge indefinitely, with sound arguments and reasons for the increase of means and facilities for our Western Traffic, but we forbear, for the reason, "he that runs can read them."

Not unfrequently, the fear has been expressed that ship canals connecting tide water at Troy with the St. Lawrence *via* lake Champlain would seriously damage

the canal interests of the State of New York in diverting a large portion of trade and traffic from the Erie Canal.

The foregoing puts a decided negation upon such fears, and in view of the rapid advance and increase of population in the Western States, and consequently a corresponding increase in the products of those States, no apprehensions or fears of the kind need be entertained. The only fear is, and it is a well founded one, *that we shall not keep up* our means and facilities for transportation, cheap and prompt, with the increase of the products of those States.

It may be safely affirmed that there cannot occur or exist *a competition*, among all the water lines available or practicable, for the simple reason, that there will ever be freight enough for them all, even in excess of their utmost capacity.

In this advanced state of the 19th century let us have an exemplification of enlarged and liberal views of State policy, leaving questions of mere party politics, which, as pursued, are great impediments to advancement in any right direction, either of prosperity, morals or civilization.

It seems remarkable, that there are men, at times, found in the halls of our national and state Legislatures who are incapable of duly contemplating and apprehending great national interests. Even Thomas Jefferson, in the initiatory processes of the Erie Canal, pronounced the State of New York as bereft of reason and as being 100 years ahead of time.

Witness, Dewitt Clinton standing *alone* in the New York Legislature, advocating his favorite measure, the Erie Canal, at the same time receiving all manner of obloquy and abuse even by men of the calibre of

Erastus Root, who called the great work by which the State and City of New York has become respectively, empire and emporium, as "*Clinton's Ditch.*"

JOHN B. MILLS.

*Civil-Engineer.*

PEEKSKILL, N. Y., September, 1870.

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## APPENDIX.

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MY DEAR SIR,

I have carefully read your paper, addressed to the people of New York, on the internal water communications of that State, and in all the main features of the project treated of, I entirely concur as I also do in your estimate of results. The tonnage capacity of the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain route is not overstated, or the cost of transportation estimated at too low a figure. The subject is one to which I have given much thought, and though on some of the details of the scheme our views may not be exactly coincident, I am satisfied that the only solution of the problem of how the water communications between Lake Erie and the Atlantic can be made to keep pace in capacity with the growing trade of the West and of New York is to be found in the way so clearly pointed out in your paper.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

W. SHANLY,

*C. E. and Contractor for the Hoosac Tunnel.*

J. B. MILLS, ESQ.,

*Civil Engineer.*

